TRAVANCORE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FIRST SESSION.

Monday, the 9th June, 1924.

(OFFICIAL REPORT.)

The Council met again in the Victoria Jubilee Town Hall at Eleven Forty-five of the Clock, with the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[*Order made by the President under Standing Order No. 12*—

(1) Printed copies of the questions and answers to be put and given at a meeting of the Council shall be placed on the Council table 15 minutes before the President takes his seat.

(2) The questions shall be put and answered in the following manner:—

The Secretary shall call the name of each interpellator in serial order, specify the serial number of his questions and make a sufficient pause to allow him a reasonable opportunity of rising in his place, if he is desirous of asking a supplementary question. Supplementary questions must be put immediately after the principal questions to which they relate.]

Document Writers.

238. MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur* cum *Pattanamtitta*): (*a*) Are the Government aware of the evils resulting from the preparation and writing of documents by inexperienced document writers?

(*b*) Will the Government be pleased to make a rule that only duly qualified and licensed persons will be permitted to prepare documents for registration?

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) (*a*) Government are informed that documents are sometimes written by inexperienced persons.

(*b*) Government do not consider that there is sufficient justification for taking any action.

Independent Shop System in the Northern Taluks.

239. MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) when the independent shop system in regard to the vend of arrack was introduced in the northern taluks of Travancore;

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[Mr. A. Hoogewerf.]

(*b*) whether a similar system for vending arrack was in vogue in neighbouring taluks in the Cochin State at the time that system was introduced in those taluks; and, if so, whether the price of arrack was the same in the Travancore taluks and Cochin taluks bordering them at the time;

(*c*) when the independent shop system in regard to toddy was introduced in the other taluks of the Kottayam Division;

(*d*) whether it is true that the late Excise Commissioner recommended the introduction of the independent shop system for vending toddy in the northern taluks only after knowing the result of the working of the same system in regard to the vend of arrack in those taluks and clearly understanding all the conditions regarding the sale of toddy in the bordering taluks of Cochin;

(*e*) whether it is true that, on the recommendation of the late Excise Commissioner, the Government sanctioned the introduction of the independent shop system for vending toddy in regard to the taluks of the Northern Division and published a notification in the *Gazette* over the signature of the Dewan, fixing the sites, the number of the shops and the dates of auction;

(*f*) whether it is a fact that, a few days before the date fixed for the auction of the proposed shops, the present Excise Commissioner, who had just taken charge of the department, recommended to the Government the cancellation of the Government notification referred to above;

(*g*) whether they will be pleased to place on the table the letters of the late and the present Excise Commissioners, the one recommending the introduction of the system and the other recommending the cancellation of the Government notification bringing the taluks under the independent system;

(*h*) whether it is not a fact that the taluks of Parur, Alangad, and Kunnatnad were then held by Mr. Nadar and the taluks of Muvattupuzha and Todupuzha by Mr. Karayalar;

(*i*) why the independent shop system was introduced at the time only in the two taluks held by Mr. Karayalar and not in the three taluks held by Mr. Nadar;

(*j*) whether it is not a fact that the two taluks of Mr. Karayalar, which have been brought under the independent shop system, partly border the Cochin State;

(*k*) whether it is not a fact that, by bringing the two taluks held by Mr. Karayalar under the independent shop system, Government have gained about Rs. 3,00,000 since the time these taluks were brought under the new system and that Government have lost a proportionately large amount during the same period by not bringing the other three taluks held by Mr. Nadar under the new system; and

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(*l*) why the three taluks held by Mr. Nadar were not put up to public auction but given to him by private arrangement?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): (*a*) In 1090.

(*b*) A similar system was in force in Cochin at the time. The prices were not the same in both borders, but the Cochin Government undertook to assimilate their prices as far as possible to ours.

(*c*) The independent shop system in regard to toddy was extended to the five taluks of Kottayam, Changanachery, Ettumanur, Minachil and Peermade in 1090 and to Muvattupuzha and Todupuzha in 1096.

(*d*) The answer is in the negative.

(*e*) Yes.

(*f*) The present Excise Commissioner recommended the cancellation of the notification only in so far as it related to the taluks of Kunnatnad, Alangad and Parur.

(*g*) The answer is in the negative.

(*h*) Yes.

(*i*) At the time of the introduction of the independent shop system there was great disparity in the rates of the tax prevailing in Travancore and Cochin. As the taluks of Parur, Alangad and Kunnatnad held by Mr. Nadar lay closely interlaced with the Cochin border, it was not considered expedient to introduce the system into those taluks also till the disparity had been removed to some extent. This reason did not apply to Muvattupuzha and Todupuzha, the taluks held by Mr. Subrahmanya Karayalar, as the former touches the Cochin border only for a short distance and the latter is not on the Cochin border at all.

(*j*) *Vide* answer to part (*i*).

(*k*) It is impossible to estimate such problematical gains and losses.

(*l*) It is neither usual nor expedient to put up to public auction taluks under the farming system.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Was the reason put forward only that the tree tax in Cochin was lower than that in Travancore?

PRESIDENT: Are you referring to the answer or to the question? You must put a supplementary question with reference to the answer and not to the question.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): I am putting a question with reference to the answer to part (*b*). I am asking a supplementary question, *i. e.*, whether the reason put forward was only that the tree tax in Cochin was lower than in Travancore.

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Yes.

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[Mr. S. Parameswara Aiyar.]

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Did the Excise Commissioner, I mean Mr. Van Ross, state at the time that the shop rental was proportionately higher in Cochin, which equalised the price of toddy on the two borders?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Is that with reference to (*f*)?

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): It is in continuation of (*b*).

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): There is no reference to Mr. Van Ross or the Excise Commissioner in (*b*).

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Has the tree tax in Cochin been increased now?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Yes.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): If so, when and by how much?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): I have no information and I claim notice.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Is it the same as in Travancore?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): I am not aware.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): The answer to (*g*) is: "The answer is in the negative." If so, how did the Government accept Mr. Raman Pillai's recommendations and publish a notification introducing this system in the northern taluks?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): On the information that was then available to the Government.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): The answer to (*g*) is in the negative. Was it a confidential letter or an official communication?

MR S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): I am not prepared to disclose the contents of a document which the Government are not prepared to lay on the table.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to say how many days after the present Excise Commissioner took charge of the department, he recommended the cancellation of the Government notification introducing the independent shop system into the northern taluks?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Soon after.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): How many days after?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): I do not remember.

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MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Is it not a fact that, in their order No. S. R. 986, dated the 17th April, 1920, Government made Mr. Nadar clearly understand that the introduction of the independent shop system into the three taluks held by him, *viz.*, Parur, Kunnatnad including Vazhakulam *pakuthi*, and Alangad including Edappalli, would not be delayed further than the biennial contract for 1096 and 1097? On the face of this letter, how was the contract for those taluks given again to Mr. Nadar?

PRESIDENT: That does not arise.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Are the Government aware that it was the continuance of this contract that gave rise to the malpractices said to have been rampant in these taluks?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Government have no information.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Is it a fact that these taluks also are to be brought under the independent shop system in the next biennial contract?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Yes.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to state the reasons for bringing these taluks now under the new system?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Government have thought that the time has now become ripe for introducing that system in these taluks.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Are the Government aware that they secured a gain of about half a lakh of rupees by bringing the two taluks held by Mr. Karayalar—Muvattupuzha and Todupuzha – under the new system, besides about one-third of this amount under tree tax?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): The answer to that is contained in (*k*): "It is impossible to estimate such problematical gains and losses."

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): How much did the Government gain by bringing these two taluks under the independent shop system four years ago?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): I must have notice.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Are the Government aware that, by delaying the introduction of the new system in the three taluks held by Mr. Nadar for four long years, they have lost about five lakhs of rupees in the way of rental and tree tax?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): The answer to that is in (*k*). Government cannot estimate such problematical gains and losses.

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[Mr. T. Kumara Pillai.]

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): With respact to (*i*), was it not the practice before to put up the taluks under the farming system to auction?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): No. In the case of big contracts it was not the practice invariably to put them up to public auction.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): Was it not done in public auction in the Huzur Cutcherry by the Dewan himself?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): Not in all cases.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF (*Nominated*): I beg to know whether there was any Government notification regarding the sale of the three taluks held by Mr. Nadar for 1098 and 1099.

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): I claim notice.

Tappers' Strike.

240. MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI (*Eraniel* cum *Vilavankod*): (*a*) Will the Government be pleased to state the occasions on which the tappers struck work in the Arukutty and other circles?

(*b*) Have the District Superintendents of Police, Messrs. Padmanabhan Tampi and Gomatinayakam Pillai, reported to the Commissioner of Police the causes of the same, and has the Commissioner submitted a report to the Government in the matter?

(*c*) If the Commissioner of Police has submitted a report to the Government on the subject, will they be pleased to lay it on the table?

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR (*Secretary to Government*): (*a*) In 1096 there was a strike of tappers in the Vaikam taluk.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The answer is in the negative. *Vide* also the answer to question No. 190 in the Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Vol. II.

Certain Works in the Pazhayar River.

241. MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI (*Eraniel* cum *Vilavankod*): (*a*) Will the Government be pleased to state whether the late Chief Engineer Mr. Bastow and the late Excise Commissioner Mr. N. Raman Pillai had, as a result of their joint inspection, sent up a report to the Government stating that that portion of the Pazhayar river which runs through the salt pans is very narrow and that the river should be widened and brought to the total breadth of 1,000 feet?

(*b*) Will the Government be pleased to state their reasons for not sanctioning the works in accordance with this report based on expert opinion?

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